

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

25X1A

FID
288

COUNTRY Thailand

DATE DISTR. 20 SEP 70

SUBJECT Communist Strategy and Tactics in Thailand

NO. OF PAGES 5

25X1A

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NO. OF ENCLS.
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SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

1. Available evidence indicates that Communism is more strongly organized, proceeding more according to a predetermined plan, and advancing much faster in Thailand than has heretofore been believed.

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2. Communist strategy in Thailand appears to be the following:

- a. By covert control of an influential section of the press, at first subtly, and then with ever-increasing pointedness, to "soften up" the Thai by convincing them that Communism is little more than a mild philosophy, not incompatible with Buddhism, and a plan whose aim is merely to give the working man an even break.
- b. To lead the opposition to the present or to any subsequent non-Communist government, yet at the same time, to be not so violent in criticism or appear to be so strong a threat that the Government will take effective measures against them.
- c. By tight control of key labor unions - notably the rice mill workers, harbor workers, and transport workers - and by influence in some quarters of the managerial side as well, to be able at any time to put a stranglehold on the economy of the country, thereby precipitating conditions favorable to their purposes, not only in Thailand, but in those neighboring countries dependent upon Thai rice.
- d. By propaganda, to acquire the support of a sufficient segment of the Thai population to give the appearance of Thai origin to what is primarily a Chinese base. In this regard, efforts may be concentrated mainly on Thai intellectuals and in the somewhat disaffected north-eastern area of Thailand.

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Next Review Date: 2008

Document No. 6
No CHANGE in Class.
DECLASSIFIED
Class. CHANGED TO: TS S C
DDA Memo. 4 Apr 77
Auth: DDA EO. 77/1763
Date: 23 MAY 78 By: 024

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- e. By careful organization, indoctrination, and control, to have an effective party that can operate underground, will follow direction, and will provide a possible nucleus for a "Democratic People's Government of Thailand".
- f. By close liaison with the Chinese Communist Party and the Soviets, to receive the additional funds necessary for the program, and to coordinate their program with the Russian and Chinese Communist Party leadership.

Propaganda and Control of the Press

- 3. The first point in the Communist plans outlined above is demonstrated in the continued evidence confirming that the highly popular and influential Thai Commercial Company publications are Communist-controlled and financed.* Although these publications had been Communist-controlled for over a year, they displayed virtually no Communist propaganda until about the time of the fall of Nanking, when they rather abruptly began to feature the Party line in their news and editorials. Opening moves were editorials to the effect that Communism was merely the doctrine of "from each according to his ability and to each according to his need". Communism was explained as a simple agrarian reform, not incompatible with the traditional Thai monarchy.
- 4. The next point was to attack, with ever increasing vilification, American and Western European policy in the Pacific, especially in China. In such an attack, the Communists are aided by two factors:
 - a. The Thai public is accustomed to an irresponsible press, and in Thailand, an editor, if he is willing to risk exposing himself to an occasional shot, can get away with saying virtually anything; and
 - b. Both the Chinese business community and the Thai Government are attempting to temporize with the Communists. The net result is that, except for the Royalist press and the English-language publications, there is very little journalistic rebuttal to the Communists' propaganda.
- 5. Even in the non-Communist press, the Communists have found apologists, either through luck, careful cultivation, or design. For example, the Royalist daily, Kiatissak, has a Vietnamese sub-editor who slants the news to meet the Communist view. A United Press article from China, printed in the Thai-language Prachakorn was turned into good pro-Communist material by clever translating. These efforts, combined with less open Communist control of certain publications, and the disintegration of the anti-Communist Chinese-language press, are increasingly placing the largest part of the printed propaganda media firmly into Communist hands. 25X1C
- 6. [REDACTED] the Communist line with respect to Buddhism is skillfully planned and is proving effective. They are taking advantage of the Buddhist belief that the next Buddha, Phra Sri An, will reputedly usher in an era of Utopian happiness and prosperity. The age of the present Buddha, Gautama, which is supposed to last 5,000 years, has now passed its 2,491 year. The Buddhists are now being led to believe that the first evidences of the new age are appearing, and that one of its manifestations is Communism. 25X1C
[REDACTED]

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Leadership of Opposition

7. That the Communists are trying to lead the opposition to the present Government and yet not be so violent in their opposition as to evoke repressive measures, is borne out in part by the fact that Communist criticism of the Government has actually been more subdued than that offered by the regular Royalist-oriented Parliamentary opposition. Communist efforts appear to have, instead, the primary aim of identifying the United States and Western nations with the increasingly unpopular Phibun-led coup clique. The Communist policy of not pushing the Government too far is further illustrated by the decision not to stage a May Day demonstration this year, and by the fact that the organizing activities of the Central Labor Union (CLU) have been conducted relatively quietly of late. The apparent aim of this latter tactic is to not bring the CLU into sharp and open competition with the Government-sponsored Thai Labor Union (TLU). Such opposition would probably result in suppressive measures being taken by the Government against the CLU.
8. Sufficient propaganda is directed by the Communists against the present Government to attract some support from factions in the opposition, and perhaps also, to influence some Western nations to back the present corrupt, inefficient and unpopular Government on the basis that "If the Communists are against it, then the Government is on our side, and we should perhaps support it". Their main target, however, is "Western imperialism". In this respect, the Communists are playing a field of racial antagonism that is fertile in any Asiatic country. While it has often been said that the Thai are not a colonial people and therefore do not have the bitterness toward Westerners that is found elsewhere in Asia, nevertheless, some anti-Western feeling, on which the Communists are apparently working with success, is present.*** There is mounting evidence of a slowly increasing anti-farang **** feeling in Thailand, and a close study of Communist-inspired propaganda reveals how the Communists are encouraging and capitalizing on this development.

Control of Labor Organizations

9. That a strenuous effort is being made by the Communists to control the key labor unions in Thailand is clearly demonstrated by available evidence. The rice mill workers are directed by YI Mei-hou, himself a rice mill owner. YI has recently gone to China for the apparent purpose of conferring with Communist officials there.***** Since Thailand is predominantly a rice economy, it is readily apparent why the Communists have concentrated their labor activities in this field. Control at the mill level is the key spot for maximum influence, or for doing the maximum damage to the country's economy with the minimum number of adherents. With such persons as YI and URR Song of the mill owner class in their camp, the Communists are assured of added cooperation. The Communists have an additional advantage in the mills because most of the workers are Chinese and are more receptive to indoctrination and control than the relatively easy-going Thai.
10. The Thai Government, which has finally become aware of the danger inherent in this situation, is attempting to force the employment of a certain percentage of Thai in the rice mills, and is planning to go into the milling business extensively itself.
11. A secondary Communist effort is apparently being directed toward the transport workers; it is weakened by the fact that most employees are Thai. There are indications also that the Communists are active among "engineers and mechanical workers", and that they have a large measure of control over the harbor workers. In this latter connection, YI Mei-hou was arbiter for the lighterage workers in a recent strike threat.

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12. The unionist labor activity of the Communists is to infiltrate the Thai Labor Union. Since this is not a union in the true sense of the word, and is admittedly the creation and instrument of the present Thai Government, it is unlikely that the Communists entertain any expectation of making an effective labor union out of it. The Communist organization is the Central Labor Union. Their undertakings with the TLU, therefore, are in all probability aimed at gaining sufficient influence to sabotage it from within, and to prevent it from ever becoming a real union in competition with the CIU. Here again, the Thai Government has recently taken cognizance of their activity and has announced that they were sending "spies" into the TLU to uncover Communist infiltrators. Union members have been warned that the Communists are attempting to infiltrate them and have been urged to expose any Communists they discover.

Support of Thai Population

13. The comforting opinion that the Thai are not interested in Communism because they are fairly prosperous Buddhists, and generally an easy-going people not receptive to changes in their social and economic pattern, discounts two important facts. The first is that Communism can succeed only with a closely organized and determined minority; and second, that skillful Communist propaganda, and the prestige gained through their victories in China, is enabling the Communists to win more Thai adherents and to exert more influence than has been generally recognized. 25X1X

25X1X [redacted] there are serious indications that the Communists are making inroads into the underprivileged, embittered, and hard-working population in the northeast of Thailand. Certain conditions favor the development of Communism in this area. The northeasterners, at present facing a serious drought threat, do not have the advantage of a relatively assured rice crop, as do the Thai of central Thailand. The requirements of the inhabitants of northeast Thailand have been given little consideration by Bangkok politicians. In the main, students from this area come from poor families. They study diligently at the Bangkok universities and return to their homes with an intense desire to better the lot of their people. It is in this area, [redacted] that 25X1X Communist propaganda and organizational work has increased.

- 25X1X 14. [redacted] Communist activity aimed at gaining support among the indigenous Thai population. A vigorous recruitment campaign is being carried on in the University of Moral and Political Sciences (UMPS) and at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. A group of young leaders in the Foreign Ministry and in the Public Prosecution Department have been Communist-oriented. The secretary-general of the Church Council and principal of Wat Borivorn now contributes articles to the pro-Communist Thai-language publication, Letters. Thienthai Apaichatobut, the leftist labor leader, whose political campaign against Lt. Gen. Luang Sirat Kotharak for a Parliamentary seat in January 1949 was sabotaged by the Communists, through the CIU, has once again been adopted by the Communists. There is considerable evidence that Luang Kach Songgram, unscrupulous Coup leader, has been working closely with Manida Wong of the Czechoslovak-Siam Trading Company, and there is a prevalent belief that Kach and others like him are ready to do business with the Communists, if it is to their personal advantage. Men like Sikhit Nizmanheain, present Minister of Industry, while not openly collaborating with the Communists, have been made use of by them. It is well known that a large part of the Thai Parliament is susceptible to bribery. A Government official with liberal political beliefs states that the Communists can pressure, or buy, enough of Parliament to give them the necessary support, and that the Thai people, who are used to accepting the Government's decisions almost without question, will continue to abide by all decisions.

15. Communist efforts to give a Thai complexion to the local Communist movement, and to de-emphasize its Chinese character and makeup, include, in addition to the use of Thai-language propaganda media, the use of Thai spokesmen. One such is Kulach Saipradit, who is presently writing a Communist-oriented novel in letters. Another is Phya Saraphai, once a Royalist and considered until recently to be a political conservative. Saraphai has become increasingly pro-Communist in his declarations and articles, and recently made a speech at Chulalongkorn in which he chastised the "white imperialists".

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25X1A * Comment. The 1932 Coup Group in Thailand made use of the same type of propaganda. Leaflets, which were reportedly Pridi-inspired and which were handed out in late June of 1932, described the revolution as a forerunner of the age of Phra Sri An.

25X1A *** Comment. In Thailand, this resentment is based principally on the high standard of living of Westerners, and on what the Thai consider the careless attitude and lack of sincere interest in the country on the part of most Westerners.

25X1A Comment. There is a feeling also, on the part of the Thai that they remained politically independent during the period of Western colonial expansion as a result of their own efforts, and in spite of the desires of European nations. Herein lies one of the roots of their being more pre-American than pre-British and pre-French. The Americans, many of them feel, have not had and do not have political designs on their territory. The British and French have had, and some Thai feel that they still have designs on Thai territory.

25X1A *** Comment. The Thai term farang is used to describe foreigners, especially members of the white race.

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